DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 064 JC 690 009

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An Analysis of the Courses Failed by Freshmen Students on Academic Probation.

Cerritos Coll., Norwalk, Calif.
Pub Date Dec 68
Note-5p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.35
Descriptors-Academic Failure, *Academic Probation, *College Freshmen, *Educational Counseling, Grades (Scholastic), *Junior Colleges, *Remedial Instruction
Identifiers-*California

Records of a sample of 100 students receiving a total of 170 F grades were analyzed and showed that general education courses, remedial courses, and courses normally taken in high school accounted for most of the failing grades. It was also found that failing grades were received in transfer courses far more frequently than in occupationally-centered courses, and that few failing grades were received in college-level mathematics or science courses with stiff prerequisite requirements. A profile for a typical failing student includes: (1) a tendency to select a non-science, liberal arts, transfer program, (2) inadequate high school preparation, and (3) a need for remedial work in English and math. Recommendations include expansion of the college's remedial program and increased efforts by the college counseling staff in group counseling, "emergency" mid-term counseling for students receiving F grades, and improvement in vocational guidance. (MC)

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ED 026064

An Institutional Research Report

For CERRITOS COLLEGE

December 1968

AN ANALYSIS OF THE COURSES FAILED BY FRESHMAN STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

JC 690 009

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of their first year of college over 20% of the Freshmen students are on academic probation. This report is an analysis of what courses these students are failing in their first semester. The data was obtained from the records of 100 Freshmen (both full and part-time) who received at least one "F" or "WF" grade in their first semester and had a grade point average below 2.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 100 students in the sample received a total of 170 "F" grades. A detailed list of the number of "F" grades earned in the various courses can be found in Table I.

Examination and analysis of the total records led to the following observations:

(1) A large proportion of the students in the sample failed courses of a remedial nature. 24% failed a course in remedial English and 5% failed remedial mathematics.

(2) A large number of the failing grades were received in courses that are normally taken in high school. 31 of the 170 "F" grades (or 18.2%) were earned in courses such as elementary algebra, elementary chemistry, beginning drafting, Spanish I, etc. This means that 29.4% of all of the "F" grades (50 out of the 170) were earned in courses that were either remedial in nature or concerned with the removal of high school deficiencies.

Table I. Courses in which an "F" grade was earned

FINE ARTS (Total = 5)
- Art History - 2
- Art - 2
- Music - 1

BUSINESS (Total = 24)
- Business Law - 4
- Accounting - 5
- General Business (Business Manage., etc.) - 9
- Secretarial/Clerical - 6

HEALTH-PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Total = 14)
- Health Education - 4
- P.E. Activity -10

HUMANITIES (Total = 41)
- Remedial English - 21
- Remedial Reading - 3
- English 1 - 10
- Speech - 2
- Foreign Language - 4
- Philosophy - 1

PHYSICAL SCIENCE-MATH-ENGINEERING (Total = 18)
- Remedial Math - 5
- Elementary Algebra - 7
- Geometry - 1
- Intermediate Algebra - 1
- Elementary Chemistry - 1
- Physical Geography - 1
- Engineering - 2

SOCIAL SCIENCE (Total = 31)
- U. S. History (Hist. 27) -11
- U. S. History (Hist. 7.1) - 2
- California History - 2
- History of Western Civ. - 1
- Psychology - 3
- Sociology - 1
- Political Science (Polit. Sci. 5) - 7
- Political Science (Polit. Sci. 1) - 3
- Police Science - 1

TECHNOLOGY (Total = 32)
- Auto Mechanics - 2
- Cosmetology - 3
- Elementary Drafting - 5
- Other Drafting - 5
- Electroncis - 6
- Machine Tool - 2
- Metallurgy - 1
- Industrial Supervision - 2
- Welding - 3
- Elementary Technical Math - 3

LIFE SCIENCES (Total = 2)
- General Biology (Bio. 10) - 2

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION - 3

(3) None of the students in the sample received an "F" grade in a college level math or science course that is required for science majors. Only four "F" grades were earned in science. One was in elementary chemistry and three were in general education science courses. Apparently only a few of the 100 students were science majors and those few lacked the prerequisite courses needed for college level science.

(4) 120 out of the 170 "F" grades (70.6%) were earned in courses that would generally be considered "transfer" courses (or preparation for transfer courses, such as remedial English). Only 29.4% of the failures were in "occupationally centered" courses in Business or Technology, and some of these courses can be transferred by majors in Engineering, Technology, and Business.

(5) Out of the 170 "F's", 58.2% were earned in general education courses. The records imply that many of the 100 students either did not have a major or they lacked the prerequisites needed for many of the courses in their major field. Therefore, they were forced to select their courses from the general education requirements where prerequisites (other than English clearance) are not needed. At Cerritos this would mean that the student would select the following courses:

1.	English	- 3 units
2.	U. S. History	- 3 units
3.	Political Science	- 3 units
4.	Health Education	- 2 units
5.	P. E. Activity	- $\frac{1}{2}$ unit
		12 units

This 12 unit program accounts for 43% of the failing grades. These courses are essentially a repeat of the high school program in which the students also failed.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From these records it seems possible to draw a profile that would typify many (though certainly not all) of these failing students.

Many of these students are students that:

(1) need remedial work in English and Math.

(2) lack adequate preparation in high school.

(3) tend to select a non-science liberal arts program designed to transfer to the State College.

For most of these students the program they are selecting places them in a "revolving door" that forces them out of school in one or two semesters. To reduce this failure rate it is recommended that:

(1) the college broaden its remedial program so that students with serious remedial problems will not be forced to enroll in courses that are college level transfer courses.

(2) the college institute a group counseling program for all students on academic probation at the end of their first semester. This program would be compulsory for all probationary students unless they obtained a release from their counselor.

(3) the counseling staff be given a list of names of all students who are receiving an "F" grade in the Mid-Term of the First Semester. With this list the counselors could do some emergency counseling before the student's problem became too serious.

(4) the counseling staff increase its efforts in vocational guidance to help these students select more realistic goals and a college prgram that is more rewarding and meaningful.